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Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 25 | Min 15 | Humidity 54% Partly Cloudy Sensex 79,943 | Nifty 24,188 | Gold 77,431 | Silver 88,330 | Dollar 85.76 | Euro 88.36 | GBP 106.24

BLAZE DAZE

BESCOM officials emphasise on role of building owners in ensuring electrical safety after 3 fire mishaps in 2 days scar B'luru

PAGE 3

NYE FINANCES

BMTC, BMRCL savour sweet returns as city's revellers lean on public transport; BBMP spends big bucks to make party arrangements

PAGE 7

Kidnapping cases surge by 21% in 2024 as compared to 2022; as children remain among the most vulnerable, experts say societal factors at play

SWEET CHILD OF MINE

Till November last year, 1,044 cases reported — 299 boys & 745 girls

"For every two cases of boys, there are three involving girl children. Among these, a significant portion involves girls aged 16 to 18, often linked to love and affairs

— Rajalaxmi Ankalagi, advocate and child rights activist

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Eager to catch the movie Pushpa 2, two young boys travelled from Kolar to Bengaluru. Accompanying them was their friendly neighbourhood astrologer Vishnu Rao.

Later, Rao convinced the boys to postpone a planned trip to Dharmasthala and stay at a lodge. The next day, he took them to another movie and performed rituals using lemons and dolls, claiming to foresee their bright futures. Rao also took their money and pressured one boy to request funds from his mother via UPI. The boy's mother, Sumangali, filed a complaint with the police. Police traced the UPI transaction to a lodge, where they arrested Rao and seized ritual items like dolls, lemons and bones.

This was among the cases of kidnappings that have a happy end. However, the 21% spike in kidnapping cases in 2024, as compared to 2022 is nothing to be happy about.

What makes this trend particularly disturbing is the heightened vulnerability of children, who, driven by innocence or playfulness, often seek help from strangers—unknowingly falling into the traps of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

Chop show must go on

Despite receiving objections from public about removal of trees to build service road for Aero Show, panel has okayed axing

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Bengaluru's Tree Expert Committee (TEC) has permitted removal of the majority of the trees proposed to be axed for the construction of a service road on the premises of the Air Force, Yelahanka for the upcoming Aero Show in February.

The permission has been granted despite objections filed by the public questioning the removal of trees for the sole event.

"Traffic could be managed by deploying extra security staff or through alternate ways of management since the event will last for a few days only. The inconvenience of two days to those driving to visit the aero show cannot be compared to the ecological loss of felling more than 60 trees. Environmental costs associated with such a hasty decision should be considered," said one of the objections raised in response to a public notice by the forest department of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) regarding the project.

As per the notice, 66 trees were proposed to be removed for the construction of the service road by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI). After inspection, TEC now has ordered removal of 60 trees.

Citizens, through their objections, have expressed concern regarding various

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>

THINGS TO DO

01 Rajasthani exhibit

The Grand Rajasthani Exhibition organised by Maaruthi Enterprises brings together rural artisans from the eastern part of India, featuring vast collections of cotton & silk handlooms & handicrafts from Rajasthan & elsewhere, Orissa tie and dye, dress material & sarees, West Bengal cotton sarees, and many more. **Where: Sri Dwaraka Convention Hall, Nanjappa Circle, Vidyaranyapura; When: Until January 19, 10 am to 9 pm**

02 Scientific fun

The National Education Society of Karnataka presents "NES Supernova 2.0." This two-day free event will showcase 350+ Science & Humanities models, ISRO exhibits, robots & drones, cultural programs, numismatics displays and will also have esports tournaments, a digital art & rocket-making competition & more. **Where: National College, Basavanagudi; When: January 3 & 4**

03 Learn Ninjutsu

An introductory class on the Japanese martial art of Ninjutsu. Martial arts is a holistic practice for life, focusing on awareness, self-control, and adaptability, applicable in daily interactions and self-defence. One can sign up for the regular weekly classes after this class. **Where: Shoonya – Centre for Art and Somatic Practices, Lal Bagh Road When: January 4, 11 am to 1 pm**

04 Nature's tales

Book reading session of "Sandalwood's Story" with Shobha Tharoor Srinivasan. Through vibrant illustrations and endearing characters, this tale introduces children to India's flora and the cultural significance of trees while inspiring self-confidence and humanity. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 4, 11 am**

05 Wellness session

'Habits That Stick,' a wellness workshop by Roy Jacob. Learn how to make effective strategies and how to track your habits and adjust your strategies week by week so that your habits stay fresh for the whole year. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: January 5, 5 pm**

Will ASHA workers finally get recognition they deserve?

Over 42,000 ASHA workers across Karnataka to stage indefinite protest starting January 7, demanding minimum monthly honorarium of ₹15,000, other benefits

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Over 42,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers across Karnataka are gearing up for an indefinite protest starting January 7 at Freedom Park. These workers, who have been at the forefront of healthcare delivery in rural and urban areas, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, are demanding better pay and recognition for their efforts.

Sources said that despite their contribution, ASHA workers have not been adequately compensated. The government's current monthly honorarium of Rs.5,000 and additional incentives of up to Rs.7,000 from the central government often do not reach them due to technical issues with the ASHA Soft portal. Workers report that only 40-75% of these incentives are disbursed.

The ASHA workers stated that for the past 8-9 years, they have been fighting for fair treatment. Numerous complaints, discussions, and protests have been organised, but no significant action has been taken yet. When hundreds of workers protested in Freedom Park in February 2024, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar assured them that their grievances would be addressed shortly. However, these promises remain unfulfilled, despite 15 high-level meetings held with state and health department officials over the past 11 months.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, the Karnataka State United ASHA Workers' Union, affiliated with the All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC), has called for statewide participation in the upcoming protest.

ASHA workers protest demanding a hike in honorarium payment at Freedom Park in Bengaluru in January, 2024

Key demands

The ASHA workers have put forth several key demands aimed at improving their financial and working conditions. They are calling for a minimum monthly honorarium of Rs.15,000 by combining contributions from the central and state governments, along with an additional Rs.2,000 for urban ASHA workers to cover the higher cost of living. They demand the immediate release of pending incentives for the past 2-3 months and the withdrawal of a recent government order mandating smartphone-based data entry without financial support and also seek mobile data allowances or alternative systems for those unable to perform smartphone tasks.

Other demands include increasing retirement benefits to Rs.5 lakhs, as practiced in West Bengal, and ensuring fixed honorariums and incentives during health emergencies or treatment periods. The workers are advocating for annual health checkups, free treatment for critical illnesses, and recognition as formal employees with access to minimum wages, gratuity, and social security benefits like PF and ESI.

Government announces term insurance scheme for National Health Mission, Namma Clinic staff

In a step to support the welfare of healthcare workers, the government has announced a term insurance scheme for staff working under the National Health Mission (NHM) and Namma Clinics. This aims to provide financial security to around 28,000 employees.
The Karnataka State Health Care Officials and Employees Association (KSHCOEA), part of the BMS union, has been advocating for this initiative for years. They had urged the government to extend health insurance and term insurance to NHM and Namma Clinic staff. However, due to delays at the state level, the Udupi district branch of KSHCOEA took the lead in pushing for this scheme.
KSHCOEA President Sreekant Swamy commended the association's Vice President, Girish J Kaddipudi, for his relentless efforts in ensuring the scheme's success through continuous communication with government officials.
General Secretary Gavisiddappa Uppar urged the government to address other pending demands of the healthcare workforce. — BMB

Ready to pay more? Bus fares jump 15% starting Jan 5

From this Sunday, one may have to pay more to travel by buses now as the State Cabinet has approved a 15% fare revision for the state's four transport corporations: Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), North Western Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC), and Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC). Briefing the media, Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said, "In 2015, when the last fare revision was implemented, diesel prices stood at Rs.60.98 per liter for KSRTC, NWKRTC, and KKRTC, and Rs.46.24/l for BMTC. At that time, the combined daily diesel expenditure for the four corporations was Rs.9.16 crore, which has now escalated to Rs.13.21 crore. Additionally, daily staff costs have risen from Rs.12.85 crore to Rs.18.36 crore, leading to a daily additional financial burden of Rs.9.56 crore for the corporations."

Sources said that the four corporations are grappling with mounting losses, with a combined debt of Rs.6,244.29 crore and cumulative losses of Rs.5,209.35 crore over the last five years. An official said, "BMTC fares were last revised a decade ago, while other corporations saw hikes five years ago. Daily fuel expenditure has risen from Rs.9.16 crore to Rs.13.21 crore, leading to an additional daily cost of Rs.4 crore. Employee salary revisions since March 2023 have added a monthly burden of Rs.54.23 crore."

It may be noted that the transport corporations submitted a proposal for a 15% fare hike earlier in 2024. However, the decision was deferred due to anticipated public opposition and the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Transport employee unions have also voiced their support for the hike, citing the lack of revenue growth and unfulfilled benefits for employees.

Meanwhile, to address pending statutory payments like provident fund dues and outstanding fuel costs, the Cabinet has approved a proposal allowing the corporations to secure a loan of Rs.2,000 crore. This loan will be taken from financial institutions with a government guarantee. "This measure aims to ensure the timely clearance of Rs.2,000 crore in liabilities and stabilise the operations of the state transport corporations", Patil added. — BMB

Cabinet cancels white-topping for BBMP Phase 3 works

The Cabinet on Thursday has decided to cancel orders related to white-topping projects under Phase 3 of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP). Orders previously issued for Packages 3, 4, and 5 (all dated July 15, 2019) will be rescinded. This decision follows the earlier withdrawal of orders for Packages 2 and 6.
The government has also annulled tenders called for white-topping projects under Packages 2 to 6 and revoked related work orders and Letters of Acceptance (LoAs). These projects, originally spanning 92 roads, were estimated to cost Rs.1,172 crore. HK Patil said, "Despite five years having passed since the orders were issued, no progress had been made.
Additionally, many of the roads identified for white-topping have since been asphalted and are under ongoing maintenance contracts, rendering white-topping unnecessary. As a result, the funds allocated will be withdrawn to ensure optimal utilisation of resources and to address the evolving requirements for Bengaluru's road infrastructure."

3 fire mishaps in Bengaluru in just 2 days

Fire at Bommasandra industrial area, Mahadevapura destroys goods, appliances; no casualties in incidents

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Fire outbreak at showroom in Mahadevapura on Wednesday (left); at a garment warehouse in Bommasandra on Thursday (right)

Three separate fire incidents were reported in Bengaluru over the past two days, raising alarming concerns about the city's electrical infrastructure. In Mahadevapura, East Bengaluru, 50 high-end bikes were reduced to ashes on Wednesday, and a junk shop was completely gutted; a garment factory in Bommansandra's industrial area went up in flames on Tuesday. Fortunately, no human casualties were reported.

A fire broke out in a garment warehouse in Bommasandra on Thursday evening at around 4:45 pm. Police officials speculate that the blaze may have been triggered by a short circuit in the warehouse. It is said that the fire destroyed large quantities of clothes, cotton, leather goods, and chemical materials, while the machinery inside the factory was also severely damaged, leading to a huge loss. Seven fire engines were deployed to the scene to control the inferno. The financial loss is estimated to be substantial, though no casualties were reported. The flames threatened nearby businesses, including other factories and a VIN hotel, causing significant anxiety among workers and residents in the area. Authorities are now investigating the cause of the short circuit and evaluating the extent of the damage.

In another incident on Wednesday, a fire broke out at a Triumph bike showroom in B Narayanpura near Mahadevapura at around 8:45 pm. Sources said that the showroom staff finished work as usual and logged out. The security had gone out for supper at 8 pm. In the meantime, upon noticing thick smoke coming from the showroom, the locals immediately informed the fire department. By then, the service centre behind the showroom had also caught fire. Three fire engines arrived and started extinguishing the fire, preventing it from spreading to neighbouring shops. While the blaze gutted more than 50 bikes and furniture, no human loss was reported in the incident. Police suspect that the accident was caused by an electrical short circuit.

Meanwhile, a junk shop at Devasandra 9th Cross, KR Puram, was engulfed in flames at around 7:54 pm on Wednesday. Fire personnel rushed to the spot with two fire engines and doused the fire. Preliminary investigations revealed that the fire was caused due to electrical leakage. Mahadevapura police station has registered separate cases regarding the two fire incidents.

"Once a power connection is provided, it is the responsibility of the building owner to maintain transformers and electrical systems. Annual inspections are mandatory," a BESCOM spokesperson stated.

BM Education

Advertorial Promotional Feature

UGC's new program promotes students' roles in edu reforms

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The University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced the 'NEP SAARTHI' initiative—Student Ambassador for Academic Reforms in Transforming Higher Education in India—to enhance student engagement and raise awareness about reforms under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This program aims to empower students to play an active role in implementing NEP 2020 and envisions students as key contributors to shaping the future of higher education in India.

According to the release, UGC sought nominations from universities and colleges for candidates with exemplary leadership, communication, and organisational skills to serve as NEP SAARTHIs. Based on nominations and institutional undertakings, selected students have been officially designated as NEP SAARTHIs. Their roles and responsibilities, along with guidelines, are detailed on the UGC website. For more information, visit the UGC website or refer to the updated guidelines and the list of selected NEP SAARTHIs.

UVCE invites applications for guest faculty positions

The University of Visvesvaraya College of Engineering (UVCE), located at KR Circle, Bengaluru, is inviting applications for the position of Guest Faculty for the academic year 2024-25. The university seeks qualified candidates to teach Mathematics, the Constitution of India, and Biology in accordance with AICTE/UGC norms. Interested candidates can download the application form from the UVCE website (www.uvce.karnataka.gov.in) and submit their completed applications, along with the required documents, to the Office of the Registrar at UVCE by January 13, 2025, said a release.

Undergraduate Diploma in Japanese

Bengaluru City University (BCU) has opened admissions for its one-year Undergraduate Diploma Course in Japanese for the academic year 2024-25. The program, aimed at skilled professionals, is offered through the Centre of Global Languages and is recognised by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Eligible candidates with professional degrees or diplomas are invited to apply. BCU is offering a 50% fee concession for students from Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories. The university also provides scholarships, internship opportunities, and placement assistance, making it a valuable opportunity for career growth. Applications must be submitted by January 10, 2025. For more details on the admission process, candidates can visit the official BCU website at www.bcu.ac.in, said Professor Lingaraja Gandhi, Vice Chancellor of Bengaluru City University.

45-day training for competitive exams

The Karnataka State Open University's (KSOU) Competitive Exam Training Centre is offering a 45-day training program for aspirants preparing for bank officer and clerk positions. Interested candidates can register at the KSOU Competitive Exam Training Centre office on the university campus by January 8, 2025, between 10 AM and 4 PM. For further details, contact the centre at 0821-2515944, said Shashikala J, Regional Director of KSOU Women's Centre, in a press release.

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Crater chaos on Belathur Road frustrates motorists

Despite lodging complaints on BBMP Sahaya App, there's no response: Motorists raise concerns about road's poor condition, posing safety risks for drivers, damaging vehicles

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Thousands of motorists are facing difficulties commuting on Belathur Road due to many craters left behind on the road, making it challenging to reach workplaces in and around Whitefield. Despite the worsening condition of the road over the last six months, motorists have alleged that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) engineer took no action to address the issue.

The motorists said that most of Belathur Road is in bad condition, and commuting on this road is not safe for them or their vehicles. "The problem with the road is that it is damaged on both sides. It will be a great help for motorists if the BBMP engineer fixes this problem without any delay," said Subhrajyoti Chakraborty, a resident of Bhattarahalli who travels by Belathur Road to reach his workplace near Whitefield.

"I have lodged complaints more than seven times with the BBMP authorities on Sahaya App but nothing has been done to date. I found the BBMP engineer closing the complaint without attending to the problem. I have also lodged the complaint on January 2. It is my eighth complaint. I do not know when the BBMP engineer will fix this problem," Chakraborty added.

A resident of Belathur, on a condition of anonymity, alleged that the BBMP engineer is not bothered to inspect the road and do the needful. "The residents and motorists have been lodging complaints on the BBMP Sahaya App, but nothing has been done. I want the nodal officer of Hoodi Ward to look into the matter. It is not clear why the BBMP ward engineer does not take up inspection of the roads on his own instead of waiting for the residents to lodge complaints," asks the resident.

Condition of Belathur Main Road on Tuesday

The resident told BM that he expected pothole and crater-ridden roads to be asphalted after the Deputy Chief Minister visited this area but in vain. "The condition of the road will be a setback for the Brand Bengaluru campaign. I hope the BBMP engineer (Hoodi Ward) will solve this problem," he said.

When informed, Hoodi Ward Assistant Engineer Shaik Moyaddin said that he would do something if the complainants meet him personally at the ward office.

Furthermore, Sitikant Sahu, a resident of Belathur, told BM that he noticed deterioration of the road condition for the last seven to eight months. "A stretch on Belathur Road was restored a few weeks ago. I expected the BBMP engineer to restore this stretch of the road, near NPS Whitefield, but nothing has been done. I want the BBMP engineer to fix this problem for the benefit of thousands of motorists who commute on this road on a daily basis," said Sahu.

> **"I have lodged complaints more than 7 times on Sahaya App but nothing has been done to date. Complaints were closed without attending to problem**
> – Subhrajyoti Chakraborty, motorist

Arunava Mukherjee, a resident from Seegehalli, added, "I have been commuting on this road for more than a year. I expected the BBMP authorities to asphalt this road but in vain. It will be difficult for two-wheeler riders to commute on this road whenever it rains."

Public outcry is louder than construction noise at this flyover

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The construction of a flyover at Veerabhadranagar Junction has been plagued by significant delays. Despite the project beginning four years ago, it shows no signs of completion, leaving commuters stuck in daily traffic jams and raising frustration among motorists, who are calling out the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike authorities for their lack of accountability.

The flyover, intended to connect Bannerghatta Road with Tumakuru Road, was envisioned as a signal-free corridor to improve traffic flow. The work, initiated in August 2020, was expected to be completed in a year. However, after four years, only about 80% of the work has been completed. The BBMP had promised to finish the project by April 2024, but progress has been slow, with only 20% of the work completed in the last year. As a result, there are doubts that the project will be completed by 2025.

Despite the repeated promises and extended deadlines, BBMP engineers have continued to cite land disputes as the reason for the delays. "The delay has been attributed to several factors, including land disputes, delayed permissions from traffic police, and lack of timely funds from the BBMP. Additionally, there is a shortage of workers, further contributing to the slow pace of construction. If progress continues at the current rate, experts predict that it will take another 8-10 months to complete the flyover. It is assured that the flyover would be completed and open for traffic by April 2025," an official said.

Traffic jam at Bannerghatta Main Road (file photo)

Motorists travelling from Banashankari, Kanakapura Road, Bannerghatta Road, and Mysore Road are facing severe congestion at the junction, causing daily hardship for drivers, local residents, shopkeepers, and pedestrians. Commuters, particularly those travelling from PES University to Veerabhadranagar Junction, have expressed frustration, as peak hours result in delays of up to 40 minutes. Narayana, a driver, blamed the BBMP authorities for the delay, saying their negligence was the cause. Another driver, Vishwanath, mentioned the difficulties pedestrians face while crossing the road and urged for the swift completion of the project.

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Roadblock woes
JC Nagar

The road opposite Ivision Opticals on JC Nagar Church Road has been closed for over a month, causing significant inconvenience to commuters and residents.

Garbage menace
Jayanagar

Dry branches & garbage lie unattended in a traffic island at Sangam Circle, 8th Block, Jayanagar. Requesting authorities to get it cleaned.

Clear the trash
MM Layout

There is a pile of garbage lying around at the entrance of 1st Main Road in MM Layout, Kavalbyrasandra, posing risks to health and environment.

5,000 organs donated under Jeevasarthakathe

Kidneys account for highest number with 1,652 transplants conducted

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Karnataka's organ donation program under Jeevasarthakathe has achieved remarkable progress, with over 5,000 organs and tissues donated since its inception. This accomplishment highlights the growing awareness and commitment of individuals and families toward saving lives through organ donation.

As per the data from Jeevasarthakathe, 1,092 donors have come forward, enabling the transplantation of 2,967 organs. Of these, kidneys account for the highest number, with 1,652 transplants conducted, followed by 912 liver transplants. Heart transplants total 274, while 117 lung transplants have been performed. Additionally, rare procedures like small bowel and hand transplants have been recorded, with 10 and two cases respectively.

Multi-organ donations have further expanded the programme's impact, with 89 such cases reported. These include 26 instances of liver and kidney transplants, 11 cases of heart and lung transplants, and 52 kidney and pancreas transplants. Such coordinated efforts to harvest multiple organs from a single donor have significantly increased the programme's ability to meet the growing demand.

Tissue donations

In the realm of tissue donations, the contributions are equally commendable. Skin donations stand at 105, while 453 heart valves have been donated for critical medical interventions. Corneal donations, a vital component in restoring vision, have reached an impressive 1,716. Altogether, tissue donations amount to 2,274, complementing the life-saving potential of organ transplants.

With these efforts combined, the total number of organs and tissues donated under the program has reached an astounding 5,330. This progress reflects the relentless work of Jeevasarthakathe in raising awareness, coordinating between hospitals, and fostering a culture of giving. It also underscores the compassion of families who, even in moments of grief, chose to bring hope to others.

"While this achievement marks a significant step forward, the gap between the demand and availability of organs remains substantial. Continuous awareness efforts, education, and policy support are crucial to building on this success," said an expert.

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Chandapura Lake pollution: Just 1% of total fine is in the bag so far

State pollution board had imposed fine of over Rs 140 crore on 54 industries, of which just Rs 1.4 crore has been recovered

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The Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) has recovered less than 1% of the total penalty imposed on industries as environmental compensation (EC) for polluting Chandapura Lake's catchment area.

KSPCB had taken action against polluting and non-compliant industries in May this year and had levied an environmental compensation of a little of Rs 142.25 crore for 54 non-compliant industries located within the catchment area. The said amount was however revised to a little over Rs 140.26 crore on technical grounds. The board has received nearly Rs 1.40 crore from four of the 54 units so far.

"The board is in the process of recovering the rest of the amount from industries. However, some industries have assailed the demand notice," said a report by KSPCB.

In its report to the NGT, KSPCB has stated that it had issued compensation notice to the majority of the industries in 2023, but some of them have approached higher courts challenging the NGT order of environmental compensation, getting an interim stay on the EC demand with conditions to submit part of EC to the Board. One of the industries has submitted a letter to KSPCB informing that it is facing a financial crisis.

"Compensation notice was issued to a majority of the industries in 2023, but some of them have approached higher courts challenging the NGT compensation, getting an interim stay on the EC demand

Effluent treatment plan

The KSPCB report has also highlighted other actions taken for the rejuvenation and rehabilitation of Chandapura Lake.

Among them is the establishment of a common effluent treatment plant to treat industrial effluents from various establishments in the area. Moreover, the tender processes for the construction of underground drainage systems for Chandapura as well as the Hebbagodi-Bommasandra-Jigani area are underway and work will commence soon.

KSPCB has also informed NGT that steps are being taken to expedite the construction of four sewage treatment plants – 24MLD capacity in Hebbagoddi, 10MLD in Bomasandra, 6MLD in Jigani and 6 MLD at Chandapura. Work on these STPs will begin after the land acquisition process, which is currently underway.

Suo motu case

Notably, the suo motu case of Chandapura Lake was taken up by NGT in 2021. A joint committee was formed by the tribunal to carry out spot inspection. The committee suggested remedial measures for the revival of the water body. The Tribunal had also imposed an environmental compensation of Rs 500 crore on the Karnataka government for its failure to control pollution in and around Bengaluru's Chandapura Lake. It was noted that the massive damages caused to the water body are due to the inaction of the authorities concerned.

This order was passed based on the factual aspects of a report by the committee that included the Central Pollution Control Board, KSPCB, Indian Institute of Science, State Environmental Impact Assessment Authority of Karnataka, National Wetland Committee, State Wetland Authority, and the district magistrate of Bengaluru.

The order also considered the reports prepared by the Karnataka chief secretary and Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board on the Chandapura Lake catchment.

NGT had noted that the buffer zone of the lake, spread over an area of 7.2 acres in Heelalige Village and 17.27 acres in Chandapura town, was encroached upon and waste was being dumped into the water body. Of the total 24.27 acres; nearly two acres were encroached by construction activities. The buffer zone of the lake was found to be encroached..

AAB elections: HC asks state view on 33% quota for women lawyers

The Karnataka High Court has served notice to the state government regarding a petition seeking 33% reservation for women lawyers in the forthcoming Advocates Association of Bengaluru (AAB) elections.

Advocate Deeksha N Amruthesh filed the writ petition requesting the reservation in the upcoming AAB general body elections. The current AAB leadership, elected in 2021, completed its term on December 19, 2024. The body consists of a president, general secretary, treasurer, and 29 Governing Council members distributed across various court units.

Senior counsel Lakshmy Iyengar, representing the petitioners, based the arguments on Supreme Court judgements including the Supreme Court Bar Council vs BD Kaushik case and the Fozia Rahman vs Bar Council of Delhi case. The petition contends that not implementing the one-third reservation for women violates fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15 and 19(1)(g) of the Indian Constitution.

On May 2, 2024, the Supreme Court mandated women's reservation in bar association executive committees through the SCBA vs. BD Kaushik case. The order stipulates one-third seats for women in executive committees, senior executive positions, and rotation-based reservation for office bearer positions, with the treasurer post reserved for women in 2024-2025 SCBA elections. The petitioners notified the court about their December 23, 2024 appeal to the respondents, requesting bylaw modifications to include 33% women's reservation for the February elections.

The petition states: "Despite these binding judicial pronouncements, the respondents have failed to take any steps to ensure gender-based reservations in the upcoming AAB elections scheduled for February 2025, thereby perpetuating systemic inequities and denying women advocates equitable representation in leadership roles..."

Vacation Judge Justice Suraj Govindraj scheduled the next hearing for January 6, whilst directing notices to the Karnataka State Bar Council and AAB. — BMB

Education dept permit to school playing name game raises eyebrows

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TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

The permission letter given to an unaided private high school at Thanisandra has raised questions over whether the Education Department officials verifies documents before granting permissions.

The SAAMAR International Islamic School, Thanisandra, maintained by Jamia Muhammadiyah Mansoora has got the nod to conduct classes for Grade 1 to 10 from academic year 2023-2024 to 2027-2028. However, the school building has two name boards – one indicating that Al-Jamia Muhammadiyah Mansoora, Mumbai, maintains the school and the other states that it is Jamia Muhammadiyah Mansoora, Mumbai. The registration number of both the trusts is the same.

A reply from the Joint Charity Commissioner, Greater Mumbai, states that the Al Jamia Mohammediyah Education Society is registered under the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act, 1950, but Jamia Mohammediyah Education Society is not registered under this Act. The documents with Bangalore Mirror indicate that the school fee is being collected in the name of Al-Jamiah Muhammadiyah Education Society. However, the Education Department renewed the recognition of the school based on the application submitted by Jamia Muhammadiyah Mansoora.

Chand Pasha, president, Karnataka Rakshana Vedike Chamarajpet unit, has lodged a complaint with the Deputy Director of Department of Public Instruction stating that people have a doubt as to which is the organisation maintaining SAAMAR International Islamic School. "I want you to summon the people in-charge of the school and inquire into the issue. It is said that a complaint was lodged with Kothanur Police Station for assaulting a few children at the school," the complaint read.

According to the documents, it said two children from Dramman in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir, were assaulted at the school and Abdul Razaq Malik, the father of the children, had complained to the Chairperson of Child Protection Committee, Bengaluru, seeking care and protection to his children.

The Police Sub-Inspector of Kothanur Police Station had issued a notice to Malik on April 29, 2024 directing him to come to Kothanur Police Station along with the victims for counseling. Based on Malik's complaint, an FIR was registered against Khalid Mushraff, principal, Mufakir, vice principal, and Ashraf, teacher.

Even the High Court has dismissed a petition filed by Jamia Mohammadia Education Society on a property dispute with Masheeh Ahmed and 10 others and imposed a cost of Rs 5,00,000 for misleading the court and obtaining an order of stay.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Director of Public Instruction said that he has received a complaint against SAAMAR International Islamic School management for submitting wrong documents while applying for renewal of recognition. "The Block Education Officer (BEO) is looking into the matter," the DDPI said.

When contacted, the BEO said that an enquiry was in progress. "I have discussed it with higher authorities. We have removed SAAMAR International Islamic School name from the list of SSLC Examination Centres," said the BEO.

NYE bash balance sheet

BMTC, BMRCL, Excise Dept rake in big earnings, while BBMP spent Rs 25 lakh for preparations

Sridhar.Vivan
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The city's transport services sure started the new year on a good note with the BMTC and BMRCL reporting increased ridership and impressive revenue generation. The Excise Department too witnessed record-breaking liquor sales. On the other hand, the BBMP spent ₹25 lakh on preparations, including barricades, lighting, and waste management. The celebrations were marred by the nine deaths across the state due to accidents and other incidents.

Ridership

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) reported earnings of ₹5.48 crore in a single day on December 31. With extended bus services on select routes operating from early morning till 2 am, BMTC recorded a remarkable 35.60 lakh passengers in one day. Additionally, special late-night buses from MG Road to various destinations carried 4,840 passengers, covering 2,093 km and generating ₹59,254 in revenue.

Namma Metro earned ₹2.17 crore on the same day. Metro trains operated extended hours, running from 5 am on December 31 to 2 am on January 1, accommodating 5.59 lakh commuters on the Green and Purple lines. Among these, 2.80 lakh passengers used smart cards, while others opted for QR codes, tokens, or group tickets.

Record Alcohol Sales

The year-end celebrations, including Christmas and New Year, fuelled unprecedented alcohol sales across Karnataka, with the Excise Department recording a staggering ₹774 crore in revenue over just nine days. This figure surpasses the department's targets and marks an all-time high compared to the past five years.

On regular days, the government earns an average of ₹65–70 crore from liquor sales. However, transactions from December 23 to 31 shattered all previous records. The single biggest sales day was December 28, despite being a government holiday, as the Karnataka State Beverages Corporation Limited (KSBCL) allowed liquor depots to remain operational under special credit facility arrangements. On this day alone, alcohol worth ₹408 crore was sold. Beer sales saw a significant uptick, with 117 lakh liters (15 lakh cases) sold during this period. However, IML products, including brandy, whiskey, rum, and gin, continued to dominate, with 201.57 lakh liters (23.33 lakh cases) sold.

Scenes from CBD on the night of December 31

BBMP spends big bucks

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) invested over ₹25 lakh in various arrangements. Key measures included decorative lighting, barricade installations, waste management, and medical support. Health kiosks and on-call doctors were stationed to address potential emergencies. According to BBMP officials, ₹14 lakh was allocated for barricades on roads like MG Road, Brigade Road, and Commercial Street, while another ₹12.7 lakh was spent on decorative lighting. The city also focused on waste segregation and management.

Deaths in the state

Nine fatalities and eight injuries during or after NYE parties. Two persons drowned in a lake in Hassan, while road accidents claimed seven lives in regions such as Hampi, Kunigal, Magadi, Gundlupet, and Davanagere. In Hassan's Malasavara village, two men, Ajith (30) and Ashok (35), drowned in Lakshmipura Lake during a New Year party. In Hampi, Binob Thakur (62), a tourist from Madhya Pradesh, succumbed to injuries after falling from an auto near Malyavanta Raghunatha Temple. In Tumakuru's Kunigal, Madhu from Manikuppe village was fatally struck by an unidentified vehicle while returning with biryani for a New Year gathering. Near Magadi's Hosapalya, a car overturned at a turn, killing Manju (31) from Gangappanahalli and Kiran (30) from Hosapalya. In Chamarajanagar's Gundlupet, a car crashed into an electric pole near Kambaragundi, killing Prathap Kumar (28), a junior power man, and Kongalayya (46). Another person sustained injuries in the incident. In Davanagere, a scooter collided with a car near Vidyanagar, killing Karthik (19) and injuring his pillion rider.

Man held for molesting girl

A 50-year-old man was arrested for molesting a minor girl on Tuesday. Police said, the accused, Mijai Mondal, owns a garbage segregation unit where the victim's 17-year-old brother was also working. The victim's mother, who is a domestic help, had gone to her hometown in West Bengal and the victim and her brother were at home alone.

According to the police, the accused volunteered to help the victim as she suffered from an eye-related problem, visited her house and took her to hospital several times. He took advantage of the situation and molested the victim several times for a few days. When the step-daughter of the accused visited the victim, she told her what happened after which a complaint was filed with the Whitefield police. **BMB**

Sneaky snaps on Metro

A man was arrested for taking unauthorised photos and videos of young women inside a metro train. The suspect, identified as an Ayurvedic doctor, was caught by passengers and handed over to the Jayanagar police. He was also fined ₹5,000 by metro officials.

Police said the incident occurred five days ago when the suspect followed a young woman in the metro and secretly took her photos and videos while she was seated. The woman did not file a complaint, and police officers during enquiry revealed that the photo appeared to be a general shot. The suspect was asked to delete the photo and submit an apology letter. However, the situation escalated when the woman slapped the suspect, prompting bystanders to intervene. The metro authorities have imposed a ₹5,000 fine on the suspect. **BMB**

BM Food & Night Life

Advertorial Promotional Feature

Bon appetit: Learn how to meal prep

There are many different ways to meal prep ahead of the week, leading to batch cooking or freezing. Full ahead meals are the most common way of meal prepping, since it's less time consuming and requires less effort. Make sure to give yourself a day or two to plan for the entire week. Let's start!

Step 1: Start with listing all your favourite dishes and make sure that they are a mix of healthy and what you like. Ideally, choosing easy-to-cook dishes will help. Ideate in a manner that repeats cooked ingredients like rice, dal, etc, so you can cook them for two meals at once. For instance, once you can have rice with dal, the other time you can toss it with veggies. If you are making rotis for a full meal, make more to turn them into wraps for another meal. If you are ordering a loaf of bread, use it in various ways so cooking the spread or filling accordingly. Write down the number of meals you want to have per day, every day and have that many leak-proof containers at hand.

Step 2: Make a grocery list according to your selection of dishes and ensure you have the time to buy/order them and do that. Ready to cook ingredients, like sauces and gravy mixes, do save time. Ensure you store the ingredients properly. Add more vegetables, nuts, fruits and other healthy foods to your meals.

Step 3: Plan on cooking the dishes when you have some time on a particular day. Make the list of prepping, and clean, peel, chop and churn whatever needed. Make the meals that are easiest to cook first, put them in the containers. If you are using the dishes on the same day, store in microwave-safe containers.

Step 4: Once you're done with cooking, organise the containers in the order of the consumption days, the last meal you will eat should go in at the back of the fridge, then the ones that go second-last and so on. The meal you want to use the earliest should be in front, for ease of access. **– Femina**

'50-60% kidnapping cases go unsolved'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

kidnappers. In 2023, 1,151 kidnapping cases were reported, of which 1,100 were resolved. In 2024, the number rose to 1,242, with 1,041 cases detected—marking an 8% increase compared to the previous year. This surge in kidnappings is attributed to social, economic, and psychological factors.

Between 2022 and November 2024, kidnapping cases involving children under 18 have shown a worrisome trend. In 2022, 863 cases were reported, involving 269 boys and 594 girls as victims. This number surged in 2023, with 1,079 cases —342 boys and 737 girls. Although 2024 has seen a slight decline, the figures remain alarming, with 1,044 cases reported up to November, involving 299 boys and 745 girls.

"When you look at the registered cases, a concerning trend emerges, for every two cases of boys, there are three involving girl children. Among these, while many cases are resolved quickly, they often don't reflect accurately in the numbers. A significant portion involves girls aged 16 to 18, often linked to love and affairs—a topic still considered taboo for children in India. These cases can range from genuine relationships to instances of luring by racketeers, flesh traders, or predators," says Rajalaxmi Ankalagi, Advocate and child rights activist.

Senior police officials said that as per a Supreme Court directive, any child under the age of 18 years reported missing must be treated as a kidnapping case. This means that all missing minors are automatically categorised as kidnapping cases. Based on this, approximately 50 to 60 cases will be registered under the POCSO Act."

Trends in kidnapping

Other than flesh trade, kidnapping for begging, rackets, cases may also reveal deeper societal issues. "A common factor is family objections rooted in caste or religion, particularly in cases of elopement. When relationships don't find family approval, parents may file cases to retaliate or teach the other party a lesson, even if the love is genuine. Girls remain the primary victims of kidnapping, often targeted for exploitation or lured with false promises of lucrative jobs which is unfortunately on the rise," explains Ankalagi.

She added that youth from lower socio-economic backgrounds, lacking proper education or skills, are particularly vulnerable. "Despite government efforts, many students only pursue education for certificates, without gaining practical knowledge. Those with limited qualifications feel empowered when offered high salaries, sometimes up to 20,000. This perceived opportunity leads them to trust recruiters blindly, unaware of potential dangers. In some cases, these job pursuits result in children running away, leaving parents unaware of their true motivations and filing kidnapping cases," she said.

According to activists, around 50-60% of kidnapping cases remain unsolved. While laws against kidnapping are adequate, enforcement faces challenges, particularly against organised rackets. Children are often abducted for begging or trafficking, with such operations sometimes backed by influential figures, including politicians and senior officials.

"Despite technological advancements like biometrics and equipped agencies, catching perpetrators remains difficult, raising questions about the effectiveness of enforcement and accountability," she said.

Vulnerable bunch

In another instance a two-and-a-half-year-old girl was kidnapped near Makkala Maramma Temple in Malleswaram around 9.20 am on Thursday. The child was playing outside her home when an unidentified woman lured her away.

At the time, the child's mother was preparing to send her older child to school. The kidnapper's face was captured on CCTV, aiding police in their investigation. A case has been registered at the Vyalikaval police station, and efforts are underway to locate the suspect and ensure the child's safe return.

Children often struggle to differentiate between risk and adventure, as the internet exposes them to both without context, experts say. According to Ankalagi, aiming to shield their children, parents often avoid discussing crime or allowing them to consume related news, focusing solely on academic success.

"While safeguarding children is important, educating them about crime is equally vital. Awareness of real-world dangers, helplines, and safety forums is essential. Just as children are taught about good and bad touch, teaching them about safety resources equips them to protect themselves and respond effectively in threatening situations.

Ignorance leaves them vulnerable and unprepared for real-world challenges," she said.

TEC orders removal of 60 trees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

environmental issues such as declining air quality and the urban heat island effect due to removal of green cover for various development and infrastructure projects in the city, including the recent proposal of service road construction.

"Trees represent decades of natural growth and render various ecosystem services. Their values cannot be replaced in a short time irrespective of the number of trees planted as compensation," said another objection filed with BBMP.

NHAI's side of argument

As per NHAI, the proposed service road is under the scope of the original project related to NH7. The agency also argues that the continuity of the service road is necessary at the given location to resolve traffic congestion issues.

"The location is also an identified 'blackspot' by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highway. The main concern is to provide a service road to avoid accidents at that location. The execution of this project was delayed due to the transfer of IAF land. However, the land issue has been cleared, and considering the safety of road users, and for smooth movement of traffic, construction of the service road is essential," NHAI has replied.

Notably, NHAI had filed an application to build a service road of nearly 12 km in length on the premises of the Air Force, Yelahanka. In a letter sent to BBMP, NHAI stated that the service road is required to avoid traffic congestion and for smooth movement of traffic during the Aero India show. This was after an MoU was executed between IAF and NHAI in June 2023 for the transfer of land from the Air Force campus to NHAI for the construction of a service road on both sides of National Highway 7.

Permission was sought to remove trees including Tamarind, Ashoka, Neem, Jamun, and Sandalwood, apart from others.

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I, CHANDAN BABU G N, father of HANVIKA G C, residing at Goni Village, Dubbegatta Hobli, Tavarekere Taluk, Tumkur, Karnataka - 572123, have changed my minor daughter's name to AADYA CHANDAN, vide affidavit dated 31/12 /2024, sworn before notary Venkataraju H G, Bangalore.

I, Raksha Krishnaprasad Nagaraj D/o krishnaprasad.N, R/o, flat T 5053, Sterling Scentia, Outer Ring Road, kariyammana, ballagere, bellandur, Bengaluru 560103. have changed my name to Raksha Krishnaprasad for all purposes

I, Rama Krishna R/o No.22, 2nd main, Vinayaka Lyt, Kempegowda nagar, Honniganahatti, Bengaluru 562130 have changed my name to Rama Krishna Nataraj (Rama Krishna N) Affidavit Dt.02/01/2025 notary Harisha G, B'luru

I Vansh Singh S/o Ravindrapal Singh, R/o Flat No. 2, Ground floor, No. 49, Site No 4 & 5, 3rd Cross, Vinayaka Layout, Marathahalli Village, Bangalore - 560037 , have Changed my name to Vansh Ravindrapal Singh

I, M N. Santhosh R/O Cardinal One, C-101, 1st Floor, Industrial Suburb Mahalakshmi Layout, Yeswanthpura, Blr-22. I changed my name from Santosh. M N to M N. Santhosh for all future purposes.

I, Girish C R/o #398, 3rd Main, 3rd Cross, Kamalangara, Bengaluru-560079 have changed my minor daughter's name from Sowmika to Deekshitha G.

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HEALTH TIP: Regular exercise can help you lose weight, lower your risk of heart disease, and build bone and muscle strength

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How to stop weight creep

Most adults gain half a kilo each year. Here's how to prevent the slow gain

As we enter a new year armed with resolutions to improve our lives, there's a good chance we'll also be carrying something less helpful: extra kilos. At least half a kilogram, to be precise.

"Weight creep" doesn't have to be inevitable. Here's what's behind this sneaky annual occurrence and some practical steps to prevent it.

Small gains add up

Adults tend to gain weight progressively as they age and typically gain an average of 0.5 to 1kg every year.

While this doesn't seem like much each year, it amounts to 5kg over a decade. The slow-but-steady nature of weight creep is why many of us won't notice the extra weight gained until we're in our fifties.

Why do we gain weight?

Subtle, gradual lifestyle shifts as we progress through life and age-related biological changes cause us to gain weight. Our:

-activity levels decline. Longer work hours and family commitments can see us become more sedentary and have less time for exercise, which means we burn fewer calories

-diets worsen. With frenetic work and family schedules, we sometimes turn to pre-packaged and fast foods. These processed and discretionary foods are loaded with hidden sugars, salts and unhealthy fats. A better financial position later in life can also result in more dining out, which is associated with a higher total energy intake

-sleep decreases. Busy lives and screen use can mean we don't get enough sleep. This disturbs our body's energy balance, increasing our feelings of hunger, triggering cravings and decreasing our energy

-stress increases. Financial, relationship and work-related stress increases our body's production of cortisol, triggering food cravings and promoting fat storage

-metabolism slows. Around the age of 40, our muscle mass naturally declines, and our body fat starts increasing. Muscle mass helps determine our metabolic rate, so when our muscle mass decreases, our bodies start to burn fewer calories at rest.

We also tend to gain a small amount of weight during festive periods – times filled with calorie-rich foods and drinks, when exercise and sleep are often overlooked. One study of Australian adults found participants gained 0.5 kilograms on average over the Christmas/New Year period and an average of 0.25 kilograms around Easter.

Why we need to prevent weight creep

It's important to prevent weight creep for two key reasons:

1. Weight creep resets our body's set point

Set-point theory suggests we each have a predetermined weight or set point. Our body works to keep our weight around this set point, adjusting our biological systems to regulate how much we eat, how we store fat and expend energy.

When we gain weight, our set point resets to the new, higher weight. Our body adapts to protect this new weight, making it challenging to lose the weight we've gained.

But it's also possible to lower your set point if you lose weight gradually and with an interval weight loss approach. Specifically, losing weight in small manageable chunks you can sustain – periods of weight loss, followed by periods of weight maintenance, and so on, until you achieve your goal weight.

2. It can lead to obesity and health issues

Undetected and unmanaged weight creep can result in obesity which can increase our risk of heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and several types of cancers (including breast, colorectal, oesophageal, kidney, gallbladder, uterine, pancreatic and liver).

A large study examined the link between weight gain from early to middle adulthood and health outcomes later in life, following people for around 15 years. It found those who gained 2.5 to 10kg over this period had an increased incidence of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, strokes, obesity-related cancer and death compared to participants who had maintained a stable weight.

Fortunately, there are steps we can take to build lasting habits that will make weight creep a thing of the past.

> **It is because of its slow-but-steady nature of weight creep that many of us won't notice the extra weight gained until we're in our fifties**

7 practical steps to prevent weight creep

1. Use chopsticks, spoon or oyster fork

Sit at the table for dinner and use different utensils to encourage eating more slowly. This gives your brain time to recognise and adapt to signals from your stomach telling you you're full.

2. Eat from big to small

Aim to consume most of your food earlier in the day and taper your meal sizes to ensure dinner is the smallest meal.

A low-calorie or small breakfast leads to increased feelings of hunger, specifically appetite for sweets, during the day.

We burn the calories from a meal 2.5 times more efficiently in the morning than in the evening. So emphasising breakfast over dinner is also good for weight management.

3. Eat the full rainbow

Fill your plate with vegetables and fruits of different colours first to support eating a high-fibre, nutrient-dense diet that will keep you feeling full and satisfied.

Meals also need to be balanced and include a source of protein, wholegrain carbohydrates and healthy fat to meet our dietary needs – for example, eggs on wholegrain toast with avocado.

4. Reach for nature first

Retrain your brain to rely on nature's treats – fresh vegetables, fruit, honey, nuts and seeds. In their natural state, these foods release the same pleasure response in the brain as ultra-processed and fast foods, helping you avoid unnecessary calories, sugar, salt and unhealthy fats.

5. Choose to move

Look for ways to incorporate incidental activity into your daily routine – such as taking the stairs instead of the lift – and boost your exercise by challenging yourself to try a new activity.

Just be sure to include variety, as doing the same activities every day often results in boredom and avoidance.

6. Prioritise sleep

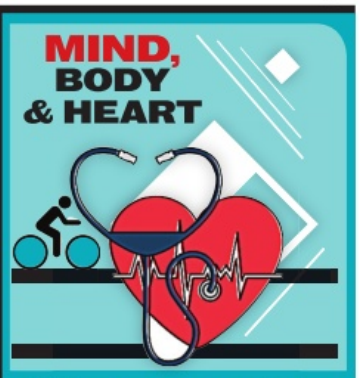
Set yourself a goal of getting a minimum of seven hours of uninterrupted sleep each night, and help yourself achieve it by avoiding screens for an hour or two before bed.

7. Weigh yourself regularly, maybe even weekly

Getting into the habit of weighing yourself weekly is a guaranteed way to help avoid the kilos creeping up on us.

Aim to weigh yourself on the same day, at the same time and in the same environment each week and use the best quality scales you can afford.

(By Nick Fuller, University of Sydney The Conversation)



All you need to know about...

Pupil size & memories

How brain forms memories

The pupil of the eye is key to understanding how, and when, the brain forms strong, long-lasting memories, according to a mice study.

Non-REM sleep

Researchers from Cornell University in the US found that new memories are being replayed and consolidated when the pupil is contracted during a substage of non-REM sleep. And when the pupil is dilated, the process repeats for older memories.

Catastrophic forgetting

The team explained that the brain prevents "catastrophic forgetting" in which the consolidation of one memory wipes out another one by separating these two substages of sleep.

The findings, published in the journal Nature, showed that it could lead to better memory enhancement techniques for humans and may help computer scientists train artificial neural networks to be more efficient.

Brain's timescale

Azahara Oliva, assistant professor at Cornell noted that the study proposes that "the brain has this intermediate timescale that separates the new learning from the old knowledge". In the study, the team equipped mice with brain electrodes and tiny eye-tracking cameras while they indulged in a variety of tasks, such as collecting water or cookie rewards in a maze. They found that when a mouse enters a substage of non-REM sleep, its pupil shrinks, and it's here the recently learned tasks -- that is, the new memories -- are being reactivated and consolidated while previous knowledge is not. In contrast, older memories are replayed and integrated when the pupil is dilated, the report said. **-IANS**

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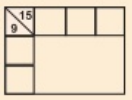
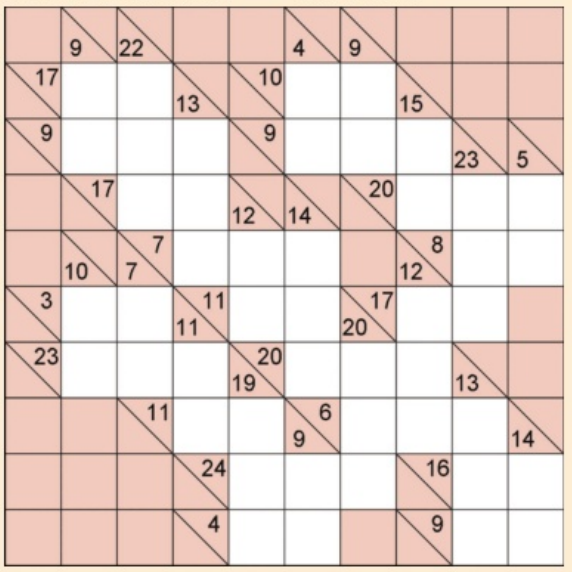
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

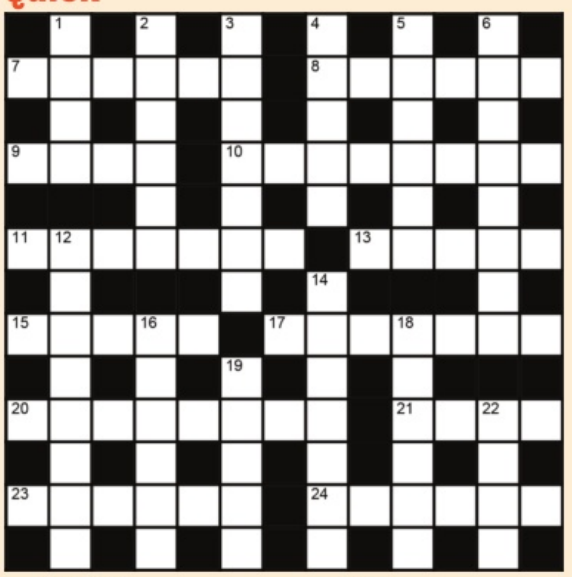


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

7 Full of tiny holes on the surface (6)
8 Dismal or depressed (6)
9 Athlete P.T. ___ (4)
10 Improved or bettered (8)
11 Referees on the cricket field (7)
13 Serpentine (5)
15 National park home to tigers, panthers and elephants (5)
17 Market places especially in our country? (7)
20 First rate, colloquially speaking? (3-5)
21 George Orwell's Animal ___ (4)
23 Complain (6)
24 Influx-"his run" anagram? (6)

DOWN

1 Explosive sounds (4)
2 Mogadishu native (6)
3 Supposed or took for granted? (7)
4 Nimble and spry (5)
5 Sarcophagus (6)
6 Father of India's Constitution (8)
12 Our former PM Dr __ Singh (8)
14 Srinagar locale (7)
16 Yearn after (6)
18 Attest (6)
19 Express in speech (5)
22 Rebel or revolt (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: L EQUALS H

LS ZLC QSHTAR JNB KCSR ACB BLOAG, OR QCRB! LS ZLC BLOAGR JNB KCSR ACB QSHTA OR OA MTSHB KHAMST.

Linemaro

I may not be a genie, but I can make your tweets come true!

Mindchow

Strength lies in improvisation. All the decisive blows are struck left-handed

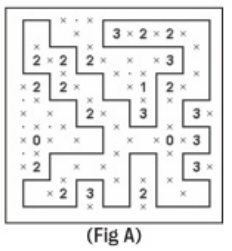
Joke of the day

I found out I was colour blind last week. ...came right out of the purple.

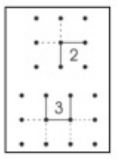
Loop

Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.



(Fig A)

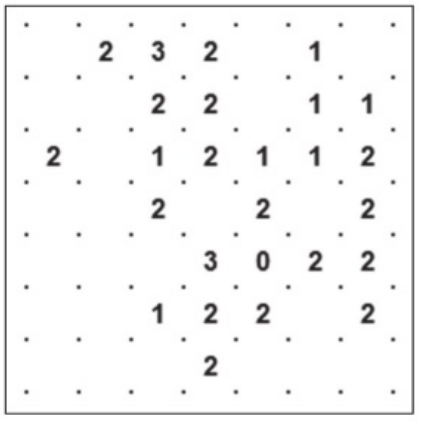


(Fig B) Not Allowed

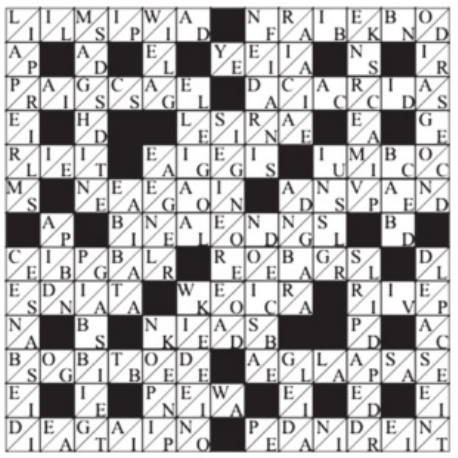
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...

1	2	3	4	5
6			A	
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

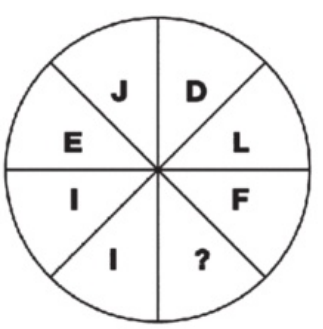
1 St ham; 6 A rale;
7 Ample; 8 Bap ma;
9 Atlas

DOWN

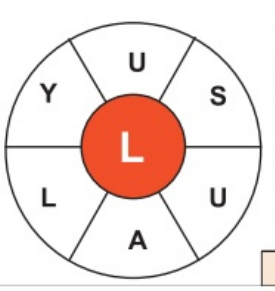
1 As Mam; 2 Arab a;
3 Pleat; 4 Hamal;
5 Pelts

Mensapuzzle

What is missing from this wheel?



Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

04 Average; 05 Good; 06 Outstanding

SudokuChallenge

			3	2		8		
								1
				8		6	5	2
	7		8		1		4	5
		1				3		
6	2		4		5		9	
1	9	3		7				
4								
		7		4	2			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

Easy = 31
6 8 8 9

Medium = 4
2 3 3 6

Hard = 28
1 2 7 2

Hocusfocus

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

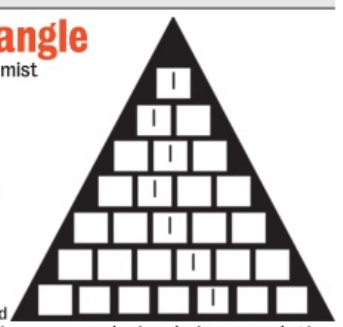
Differences: 1. Knife is missing. 2. Hat is different. 3. Line is added to sidewalk. 4. Woman's collar is missing. 5. Napkin is smaller. 6. Window in door is smaller.

Riddler

Which word does not belong to the group?
• arrow • dagger • spear • shield

Alpha triangle

1 Iodine for the chemist
2 Not out
3 Loud noise
4 Have a meal
5 Condescend
6 Conclusion
7 Refusing to grant



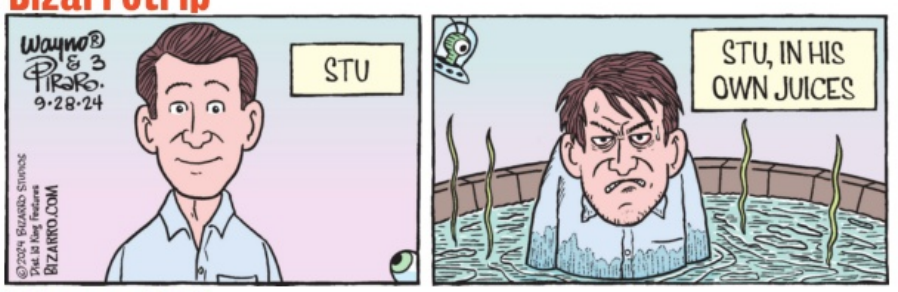
Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS

Popeye

Bizarrotrip



Diamond Lil

Hart of the city

STRIKE!
YOU'RE REALLY GOOD! YOU SHOULD COMPETE.
NAH, I ALREADY DO MYSTICS: THE GROUPING TOURNAMENTS. YOU GOTTA HAVE A LOW-STAKES HOBBY.
MAYBE I SHOULD GET SOME LOW-STAKES HOBBIES.
BOWLING'S PRETTY FUN.

Crankshaft

IF PEOPLE ARE FRIGHTENED ENOUGH BY A BOOK TO BAN IT...
THEN THERE MUST BE SOMETHING THERE THAT'S WORTH READING.
YOU'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING!
tombatiuk.com/books
9-28

Mutts

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, old health issues may resurface. It may cause anxiety and restlessness, which in turn may affect your focus and productivity. You might also find yourself wasting time on unimportant tasks. It's important to control your spending on unnecessary items, as it could impact your financial health.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today, at the start of the day, you may feel unfocused, but with blessings from elders, you'll regain control of the situation. Resources crucial for your projects will become available, and your sources of income are likely to increase. Losses may transform into profits, boosting your financial health.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today is good for you on the professional front. You may expect a big order from an overseas client today; this may improve your business liquidity. You'll likely meet an influential person who can help grow your business. Your relationship with your boss will strengthen, and you may be promoted due to your hard work, raising your prestige.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
You are blessed by your elders today, so you will remain calm and patient in your decision-making. You may feel inclined to visit a spiritual place to seek peace of mind, and you could also make a donation for its development. There may also be chances for overseas travel.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
You may feel dull today due to health issues; this could also affect your work. Mysterious fears may make you sensitive and emotional. You must avoid rushing while driving or engaging in adventurous activities. Your attraction to the occult might deepen, and you are advised to visit a religious place for peace.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
With blessings from the moon, you will feel happy today. You'll help those in need and reflect on your past mistakes in your personal life. Your relationship with your spouse will improve, strengthening trust and confidence. Disputes with business partners are likely to be resolved.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, you will feel healthy, with old health issues resolving. You'll have control over your opponents and business rivals. Money that was previously stuck will be recovered, improving your liquidity. A new responsibility at work may come your way, offering benefits in the near future.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today may be a mixed day. You may find yourself dealing with issues related to your children. Couples expecting a child could receive good news. Wisdom will help you resolve disputes in both business and social life. Students may consider overseas education, while those working may think about further studies for career growth.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may feel disappointed at work. There may hardly be any moments of enjoyment. There could be losses related to property matters. It is advised to postpone investments to avoid further losses. You should also take extra care of your parents' health.

Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you are blessed by the moon. You'll feel a strong inner drive today and you'll be able to make tough decisions at work. Social gatherings will expand your network, which will prove beneficial for work in the future. Property-related disputes with siblings are likely to be resolved now.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you may be busy with family matters, including plans for your kids' academics. You might spend money on artefacts and creative items to renovate your house. Short trips for kids' education may also be planned. Be cautious about any addictions, as they could disturb domestic harmony.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
You are blessed by the moon today; you will have the courage to make and execute plans effectively. However, it's important to keep your excitement in check to avoid making mistakes. Be sure to read documents carefully before signing. Your rivals and opponents will be under control today.

KIDZONE

Chandana, Bengaluru

Akshadha, Bengaluru

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SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
18-4(2)2)) = 18-16 = 2

RIDDLER shield; Shield is the odd one out because it is the only piece of defensive armor. Arrow, dagger and spear are pointed weapons used to attack.

QUOTE He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.

UNCODE

S	A	L	A	T				
A	B	A	M	P				
M	A	P	L	E				
A	R	E	A	L				
M	A	T	H	S				

FAST FIVE

M	A	T	H	S				
A	R	E	A	L				
A	B	A	M	P				
S	A	L	A	T				

BULL'S EYE
ally, lulu, slay, sully, usual, USUALLY

STRIKE OUT

L	I	M	P	I	D		F	R	I	E	N	D		
A		A		L		Y	E	A		N		R		
P	A	S	C	A	L		A	C	A	C	I	A		
E		H			E	I	R	E		A		G		
L	E	I		E	G	G	S		U	M	B	O		
S		E	A	G	A	N		A	S	P	E	N		
	A		B	E	L	O	N	G	S			D		
C	I	G	A	R		R	O	A	R	S		D		
E	D	I	T		W	E	I	R		I	V	E		
A		B	K	I	D	S			P			C		
T	O	P	N	O	T	C	H		F	A	R	M		
A	N	S	H	I		B	A	Z	A	A	R	S		
	M		A		S		S							
	A		D		K									
U	M	P	I	R	E	S		S	N	A	K	Y		
	L		M		E		I		D					
U	S	H	A		U	P	L	I	F	T	E	D		
P		M		S		I		F		B				
P	O	R	O	U	S		G	L	O	O	M	Y		
N		R		E		R		M		E				

QUICK

P		S		A		A		C		A				
O	R	O	U	S		G	L	O	O	M	Y			
P		M		S		I		F		B				
U	S	H	A		U	P	L	I	F	T	E	D		
	L		M		E		I		D					
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	A		D		K									
A	N	S	H	I		B	A	Z	A	A	R	S		
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A		B	E	L	O	N	G	S			D			
S		E	A	G	A	N		A	S	P	E	N		
L	E	I		E	G	G	S		U	M	B	O		
E		H			E	I	R	E		A		G		
P	A	S	C	A	L		A	C	A	C	I	A		
A		A		L		Y	E	A		N		R		
L	I	M	P	I	D		F	R	I	E	N	D		

MENSA PUZZLE
K. Split the circle into 4 quarters, horizontally and vertically, with 2 segments each. Starting with the top left segment, the sum of the numerical values of the letters in the 2 segments equals 15. The sum of the next pair of segments equals 16, then 17, then 18.

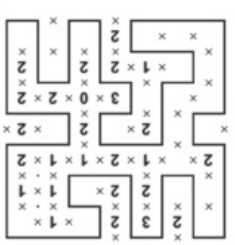
SUDOKU

9	1	5	3	2	6	8	7	4
2	8	6	7	5	4	9	3	1
7	3	4	1	8	9	6	5	2
3	7	9	8	6	1	2	4	5
5	4	1	2	9	7	3	6	8
6	2	8	4	3	5	1	9	7
1	9	3	5	7	8	4	2	6
4	5	2	6	1	3	7	8	9
8	6	7	9	4	2	5	1	3

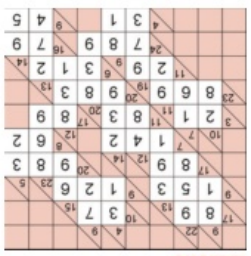
ALPHA TRIANGLE
I, In, Din, Dine, Deign, Ending, Denying.

GO FIGURE
Easy
8 + 8 + 9 + 6 = 31
Medium
6 – 2 – 3 + 4 = 4
Hard
2 x 2 / 1 x 7 = 28

LOOP



KAKURO



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SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Royal is ready

Royal, bankrolled by Jayanna and Bhogendra under the Jayanna Combines, is scheduled to arrive in theaters on January 24 across the state. Director Dinakar Togudeepa makes a comeback with this movie six years after his last film Life Jothe Ondh Selfie.

The team of Royal has already released three songs of the movie

"I am very happy with the success of Royal's soundtrack. The movie has turned out well and all the credit goes to script writer Raghu Niduvalli who also wrote the dialogues," said Togudeepa. Viraat plays the lead in Royal while Sanjana is paired opposite him. "I consider the chance to act in a movie directed by Dinakar Togudeepa as a boon for me," said Viraat.

Gurunanadan is Mr Jack

Gurunandan of First Rank Raju fame, celebrated his birthday on Monday. The title of his latest movie – Mr Jack – was unveiled on the occasion. Mr Jack is bankrolled by Gurunandan under the Mandimane Talkies banner.

Sumanth Gowda debuts as a director in Sandalwood with this movie. "I wrote the script and screenplay also for this film. I approached Gurunandan after writing the script. It is about Janakiram, a stand-up comedian. I have tried to showcase Gurunandan in a different avatar. The movie has four songs," said Gowda.

Gurunandan said he was not aware that the title would be released during his birthday celebrations. "The team members invited me here stating that I have a surprise here and they released the teaser as a gift on my birthday," said Gurunandan.

Gurunandan said the script was very interesting.

Round the world on a work trip

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia has kicked off the New Year with a busy schedule, taking on work commitments across the world.

As 2025 begins, the actress is busy exploring exciting new projects and collaborations on an international scale.

Tamannaah took to her Instagram to give a glimpse of her busy schedule, posting a photo of herself sitting in a car with the location tagged as Dallas, Texas. The 'Baahubali' actress also shared a video showing her traveling to a location with her team.

Yesterday, Bhatia took to social media to offer a glimpse of her virtual celebrations with her parents. She shared a photo from her video call session on her Instagram stories, writing "Happy New Year" along with heart emojis in the caption.

The actress also posted a video from her car, where she was seen flashing a radiant smile while recording the clip. Just a few days ago, Tamannaah treated her fans to glimpses of her peaceful birthday getaway on Instagram, giving them a peek into her celebrations. Among the candid shots, one photo captured Tamannaah, her boyfriend Vijay Varma, and their friends enjoying a fun video game session together.

–IANS